



# **BLACK-AMERICAN EXPERIENCE**

# Overview

- **Definition of Black-American as defined by DOD Dir. 1350.2**
- **Describe the Nations of Africa**
- **Describe the African Society**
- **Explain the Slave Trade Period**
- **Describe the Slave Culture**
- **Define Slavery and the Economy**
- **Define the Black-American Culture**
- **Describe Black-Contemporary Issues**

# **Black-American Experience**

- **Definition**
  - Black (not of Hispanic origin) as defined in DOD Dir. 13 50.2 is a person having origins in any of the original peoples of Africa
- **Nations of Africa**
  - Early nations and Kingdoms include: Ghana, the first great empire (650AD-1200AD, Mali overthrew Ghana in 1235, Songhay captured Mali in 1469AD

# African Society

- The Traditional African family was composed of the following:
  - All members of the community
  - In the extended family community members were viewed as family
  - The traditional family included not only the deceased but the unborn in the womb
  - The family recognized and accepted the belief that their existence depend on all family members living or deceased.
  - The eldest male is head of the family
  - Early Africa was a mixture of tribes, each had distinct language, and social structure.

# African Society

## ➤ Family Roles:

- Men-providers, educators, and disciplinarians
- Women- responsible for social functions, children, the market, taking care of other children in the community
- Children- belonged solely to the family, birth extremely important, parents believed they were reborn through their children

## ➤ African Class System (Clans)

- Top Tier- born of free men
- Middle Tier- mostly workers no proof of belonging in the clan
- Bottom Tier- composed of the disgraced or degraded, slaves or POW's

# Slave Trade Period

- Dutch warship brought the first 20 Africans to Virginia they were sold for needed supplies
- Approximately 7 million slaves made the journey in the 17th century (1 out of 5 died)
- Why Slavery?
  - Viewed as savages, animals, different, therefore less than human.
  - Blacks had a different lifestyle, color, culture and language
  - New nation required a stable work force
  - World business, isolation, different language, broke them down to adaptive superiority in order to survive

# Why Slavery Worked

- Lack of knowledge the Africans knew nothing of the land, food, and weather
- The slaves were made powerless, which allowed slavery to work
- Used Black slaves versus Native-Americans they could run away

# **Role of the Slave Family**

- Marriage no legal standing but lasted for decades, (jumped the broom)
- Owners found marriage a stabilizing force
- Head of household changed from the man to the women, fathers were often sold
- Father viewed as a breeder, not able to choose mate
- Mother Transmitter of African history and culture
- Children considered “ebony” or “black gold”

# Social Status

## ➤ Dependent on:

- Free or slave- some Africans came to the new world free with Columbus
- Owner of the slave-owners position was very important, the more slaves one owned the higher the status
- Field worker, housework, laborer, artisan- status depended on where they worked
- Male-Female
- Complexion (dark vs. light) Light skinned work in housework, dark skinned in the field

# Music and Language

## ➤ MUSIC

- Music is and has been an important element of the African-American culture
- Couldn't use drums because they'd send messages and start an uprising
- Overheard the white church goers, changed the rhythm, rewrote the words to fit their dialect and to show their feelings

## ➤ LANGUAGE

- Communication with new slaves forbidden
- Expected to communicate with owner and show them respect, regardless of time in captivity
- 800 different dialects

# **Religion**

- **Slaves were slow to give up own religion, wanted to maintain tradition**
- **Church afforded a brief rest period and secondary gains**
- **Services given by White preachers<Black preachers could only preach in front of masters who controlled sermon**
- **Three types of churches, White with Black members, Black churches with White leadership, Black churches with Black leadership**

# **Development of the Black Church in America**

- Blacks knew as long as they remained in White churches conditions would remain the same due to the following conditions:
  - Lack of self-help programs for the Blacks
  - Non-participation in church activities
  - Absence of Blacks in leadership roles
  - Doctrine that did not serve the needs of the Black's

# **Impact if Slavery on the Economy**

- **Cheap labor force**
- **Slavery enhanced the status of owner through profit, prestige, depending on number owned**
- **Myths and stereotypes were used to justify the exploitation of Blacks**
  - **Ignorant, lazy, incapable of competing, and inferior in intelligence**
  - **Less than human**
  - **Natural station in life of Blacks was slavery**

# **Slavery and the Economy**

- Early laws during slavery and their impact on Black Americans
- Emancipation Proclamation
- Reconstruction Period (1870-1877)

# **Black American Culture**

- **Source for Black Culture**
- **Black-American Family**
- **Customs and Traditions**
- **Dynamics of Black-American Culture**
- **Religion**
- **Laws and Black-America, 1877 to present**
- **Civil Rights Movement**

# **Black Contemporary Issues**

- **Education**
- **Employment**
- **Political Power**
- **Black on Black Crime**
- **EO Impact in the military**
- **EO in the military**

# Military Participation

- Colonial Period
- Revolutionary War
- Post-Revolutionary War
- Civil War
- Indian Campaigns
- Spanish-American War
- World War I
- World War II
- Post World War II
- Korean War
- Vietnam era to present

# Summary

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